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DEPARTMENT FOR IO/UNP/PAUL WICKBERG, EAP/MLS/AARON COPE,  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/25/2027

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: GAMBARI TO PUSH DIALOGUE IN BURMA; CHINA STILL  
SUPPORTS "ROADMAP"

REF: A. EAP(COPE)-EMBASSY(BARBORIAK) EMAIL (10/25/07)

- [1](#)B. BANGKOK 5520
- [1](#)C. JAKARTA 2929
- [1](#)D. JAKARTA 2980
- [1](#)E. USUN 831
- [1](#)F. RANGOON 1050

Classified By: Ambassador Clark T. Randt, Jr., Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Drawing from Ref A talking points, the Ambassador encouraged UN Special Envoy Gambari October 25 to push for more concrete progress in Burma. Gambari confirmed that he will return to Burma "in the first week of November."

In addition to praising Chinese efforts on his behalf, Gambari asked for the United States and the UK to limit their public pressure on him in order to create "space" to carry out his good offices mission, and he suggested the formation of a core group on Burma, including the P5, India, Japan, Norway and ASEAN. Gambari confirmed that he passed Aung San Suu Kyi's message regarding the Beijing Olympics to Chinese officials and that he will continue to push for dialogue between Aung San Suu Kyi and Burmese military leaders. Gambari stressed that he provided his briefing to the Ambassador "early" because the United States had provided exceptional assistance. He urged the Ambassador to keep the fact of the briefing confidential.

[1](#)2. (C) Summary continued: In an earlier meeting on October 25 with Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei (other subjects reported septels), AFM He affirmed Chinese Government support for Gambari's mission and reiterated PRC opposition to sanctions. AFM He expressed support for the Burmese "roadmap to democracy" and said China would be amenable to forming a core group, contingent on GOB agreement. The Ambassador noted that while the United States is open to initiatives that will show results on the ground in Burma, the "roadmap" has been around a long time and has yielded little progress to date. End Summary.

Gambari to Return the "First Week of November"

[1](#)3. (C) The Ambassador met UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari on October 25 in Beijing, along with UN Resident Coordinator Khalid Malik. In response to the Ambassador's encouragement to continue to use his "good offices" to influence the Burmese regime, Gambari said the Burmese Government agreed to his visit to Burma in the first week of November. Gambari will travel to Tokyo on October 25 and return to Singapore on October 27 to await a Burmese visa to enter Burma. Gambari said he hopes the visit will take place as early as November 1, but the exact date remains unclear. "They agreed to the first week of November," he said, "but not the exact date."

That could be November 1 or November 7."

#### ASEAN Members and India Take Positive Steps

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14. (C) Gambari said that ASEAN has "no common policy" on Burma and that in addition to seeking support for his "good offices" mission in the region, one of his trip objectives is to bridge the gap between the more forward-leaning Singapore (as evidenced by its strong ASEAN Chair statement September 27) and the rest of ASEAN. To that end, he noted that Thai Prime Minister Surayud Chulanont exchanged two letters with Burmese Senior General Than Shwe "soldier to soldier and Buddhist to Buddhist" expressing concerns over the recent turmoil in Burma and encouraging the regime to cooperate with the UN "good offices" mission (ref B).

15. (C) Indonesian President Yudhoyono also sent a letter to Than Shwe encouraging the Burmese regime's cooperation with the UN (ref C), Gambari said. Indonesian FM Hassan Wirayuda telephoned Burmese FM Nyan Win at Gambari's request expressing similar concerns. Lastly, Gambari said the Indonesians may follow up on his suggestion to send another envoy to Burma. The recent visit of Lt. General (ret.) Agus Widjojo to former Burmese PM Soe Win's funeral (ref D) was too brief to make any substantial progress.

16. (C) Gambari expressed satisfaction that India expressed support for his good offices mission on the record and said he believes Indian PM Singh will transmit the "appropriate message" to the Burmese regime.

#### China "Very Supportive" of Gambari Mission

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17. (C) Gambari stated that the Chinese are "very supportive" of his efforts and have offered "to intercede in order to produce more timely results." Gambari was pleased with State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan's "deep interest" in Burma. He noted the Chinese shy away from overtly advocating democracy in Burma, preferring to push a "more inclusive" dialogue process. Gambari added that he passed on Aung San Suu Kyi's message to the Chinese (ref E) about her unwillingness to leverage the Beijing Olympics, and that "China should not worry about a democratic Burma."

18. (C) Gambari reported that "none" of the countries in the region supports sanctions. He added that even though the EU has strengthened its sanctions regime, it is also supporting an increase in humanitarian assistance. This gives Gambari "something to work with," he said, because instead of mere threats he can also provide incentives. Gambari highlighted UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown's promise that if Burma makes progress politically, PM Brown will promote economic incentives for Burma through the G8 and IMF.

#### Gambari Requests "Space" and Suggests a Core Group

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19. (C) Gambari made two requests. First, he stressed the need for the United States and the UK to give him "space." If his mission is seen as reacting to U.S. pressure, Gambari's effectiveness with the "very paranoid" Burmese regime will be compromised, he said. Second, Gambari supports the creation of a core group, including the P5, India, Japan, Norway and Singapore (as ASEAN chair) to meet and create consensus on the way forward for Burma. He said he believes that U.S. UN Ambassador Khalilzad's recent convening of a core group on Gambari's behalf was premature. He added that his next visit to Burma should not be evaluated as a "make or break" step and instead should be seen as part of a process.

#### Gambari to Push for Dialogue

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¶10. (C) Gambari suggested that U.S. understanding of the deal between the regime and Aung San Suu Kyi (ref F) is flawed. The regime only agreed to appoint a liaison by October 10, not that the dialogue would actually commence by that date. The Ambassador expressed concern that regardless of the date specified, the dialogue had yet to begin, and that furthermore, the promotion of Aung Kyi, the recently-appointed government liaison to Aung San Suu Kyi, to Minister of Labor, raises doubts about his ability to function effectively in a liaison role. Unaware of Aung Kyi's promotion, Gambari said he would follow up on the matter.

¶11. (C) The Ambassador encouraged Gambari to visit detained activists and other democracy supporters and to push for greater access for international humanitarian organizations and NGOs. Gambari confirmed that he plans to meet with "88 Generation" students, monks and National League for Democracy members, as well as other opposition figures. Gambari added that the Burmese regime, in principle, had agreed to a greater presence for the International Committee of the Red Cross.

¶12. (C) Gambari also encouraged the United States to renew talks with the Burmese regime, because of, rather than in spite of, the current turmoil. The Ambassador responded that such a step would be difficult and expressed hope that the Burmese regime would respond positively to Gambari's message. Gambari stated "I'll tell them to their faces," but he said face-to-face dialogue between Aung San Suu Kyi and the ruling generals will be difficult because of the deep level of mutual mistrust and overt disdain. Gambari said he has pointed out to the regime that if it can enter into cease-fire agreements with 17 armed ethnic groups, it should be able to engage in dialogue with one unarmed woman and her party.

AFM He Sees Progress in Burma  
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¶13. (C) Earlier on October 25, Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei told the Ambassador that Gambari met with State Councilor Tang on October 25 and with AFM He the previous day, and that Gambari expressed appreciation for Chinese support. AFM He reported that Gambari described the situation in Burma as improving, and noted that some of his suggestions based on his first visit to Burma have been

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heeded, including a lifting of the curfew, the release of "almost all" detainees and the announcement that the government will take the third step in the seven-step "roadmap to democracy" and establish a Constitutional drafting committee.

¶14. (C) AFM He said that Gambari stressed these improvements are not enough. Gambari told Tang that the GOB has agreed to allow him to return to Burma in early November and that he plans to talk to a broader range of contacts, hoping to see concrete action on the promise to engage in meaningful dialogue. He will also urge the GOB to take tangible steps toward progress on economic and social issues. AFM He added that Gambari hopes that all members of the international community, including China, will support him in this mission.

ASEAN Members Oppose Sanctions  
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¶15. (C) AFM He related that Gambari, during his recent swing through ASEAN capitals, found that Burma's neighbors support his mission and continued engagement with Burma. AFM He told the Ambassador that Gambari noted that ASEAN members are unified in their opposition to sanctions, as they do not believe sanctions will be effective in persuading Burma to

change its behavior. ASEAN members urged Gambari to encourage both sides to move ahead with dialogue.

#### Roadmap a Viable Way Forward

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¶16. (C) AFM He added that Beijing views "the roadmap" as a process, and that we should not expect to see results after only one or two visits. He said progress brought about through dialogue "will not proceed in a straight line" and that there will be setbacks. He noted that the GOB has reached reconciliation with 17 of Burma's 18 ethnic groups, all of which have armed units. Although the "roadmap" has been criticized as failing to be fully inclusive of all groups, AFM He called it a "good start." AFM He reiterated the PRC's opposition to regime change, stating that the military junta "will be there for some time, and we must deal with it." He added that the regime has recently released over two thousand detainees and that Beijing estimates "only a few dozen" remain in prison.

¶17. (C) AFM He said that State Councilor Tang pledged China's firm support for Gambari's efforts. AFM He voiced concern that "some countries" are not being helpful, notably Australia and the United States, with their support for unilateral sanctions. AFM He noted that the EU has said that sanctions are not the only way forward and stressed the need for a package of incentives, even small ones, as opposed to ineffective sanctions alone.

¶18. (C) AFM He reported that Tang agreed with Gambari's assessment that economic development is a fundamental issue for Burma as a means for dealing with social instability. He reiterated that there are three goals for Burma -- stabilization, economic development and democratization -- and that democratization cannot be achieved without progress on the first two.

#### China Open to Core Group with GOB Agreement

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¶19. (C) AFM He reported Gambari's desire to form a committee at the UN in New York under the Secretary General or Gambari's office to work with Burma on the "roadmap." He suggested including the P5, India, Japan and ASEAN members as well as Norway, as a major non-EU donor. AFM He added that China is open to this suggestion, but Rangoon's agreement would be required. If the Burmese regime sees it as a mechanism to apply pressure, the proposal could prove counter-productive.

¶20. (C) The Ambassador responded that the "roadmap" has been in place for a long time but has yielded little or no progress. The GOB has stated they want dialogue and appointed a representative, but has not taken any meaningful steps to engage the opposition. The United States is open to any proposal that will show results on the ground in Burma, he said, noting that the regime has been unwilling to change in the past.  
Randt